

Preliminary Amdt. dated October 14, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-28 were included in the original filing. Claims 1, 4, 12, 14 and 24 have been amended, and claims 5, 6, 15, 16 and 26 have been canceled. Therefore, upon entry of this preliminary amendment, which is respectfully requested, claims 1-4, 7-14, 17-25 and 27-28 will be pending.

The specification has been amended to correct a typographical error; specifically "copments" has been replaced with "comments" at page 6, line18.

The claims as originally filed were rejected during prosecution in the parent case. It is believed that the amendments made herein place the claims in allowable condition over the art cited in the parent case and also cited herein in the accompanying Information Disclosure Statement. For example, amendments were made to claim 1 so that the claim recites that the first user and the second user are initially not connected in an instant messaging session, and that the first and second user are then connected in an instant messaging session if a reply comment fits a matching criteria. Similar amendments were made to independent claims 12 and 24. It is respectfully asserted that the cited references do not teach or suggest these or other limitations in the claims.

CONCLUSION

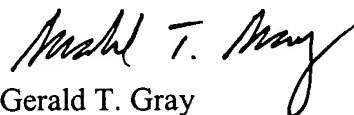
In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

PATENT

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If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 925-472-5000.

Respectfully submitted,



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